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CIA Aided City Cops on Intelligence in '72

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Washington, Jan. 15 (News Bureau)—The "sorry" state of intelligence operations in the New York City Police Department in 1972 prompted department officials to seek help from the Central Intelligence Agency, according to CIA documents obtained today.

The CIA responded by providing a four-day course here in intelligence-gathering and analysis for 12 New York police officers in September, 1972.

Before that training exercise, there were four "seminars and briefings" conducted by the CIA for senior city police personnel in which the agency provided presentations that ranged from demonstrations of explosive devices to information-gathering techniques.

In addition to detailing the 1972 contact, the CIA papers also show that a warm relationship existed between former Police Commissioner Howard Leary and agency officials in 1966 and 1967. Leary made several visits to the agency, received a briefing in New York and had dinner given in his honor at CIA headquarters by former CIA Director Richard Helms.

But the most extensive involvement with the CIA occurred when then-Assistant Chief Inspector Arthur

C. Grubert met a CIA aide on Aug. 2, 1972. Their conversation was reported several days later in a memo drawn up by CIA Training Director Hugh T. Cunningham, who said:

"The assistant chief inspector painted a sorry picture of the current state of intelligence in the NYPD. Although the department has had an intelligence division for many years, this has never been more than a glorified investigative staff which handled sensitive cases.

"Currently, the division does no formal analysis and does not operate a viable intelligence system."

Cunningham said that he told Grubert that the CIA could assist by giving his senior officers "a thorough grounding" in setting up and running an intelligence operation. But Cunningham also warned Grubert "that any association between his department and this agency must be held in the strictest confidence."

The CIA is prohibited by law from exercising any police or law-enforcement powers. But CIA officials contended that they had not violated any law by assisting New York's and other police departments but were, instead, complying with the 1968 Omnibus Crime Control Act.

Memos in the CIA papers indicated that at the time of the request for CIA help in 1972, New York City police officials were worried about the possibility of terrorist activity against Arab and Israeli delegations to the United Nations.

New York police contacts with the CIA also included these instances prior to 1972:

- A May 1966 personal seminar conducted for then Commissioner Leary including a "briefing" on foreign weaponry and electronic snooping. Then, CIA officials went to New York in October to brief Leary on "a new scientific technique" that could detect whether an individual had handled a particular type of weapon in the preceding 48 hours.

- In October 1967 Leary joined high-ranking police officials from other cities on a trip to the CIA. Formal presentations including demonstrations of explosives, a tour of training sites, an exhibit of foreign weaponry and a display of air operations. On Oct. 6, the memo said, the CIA director gave a dinner in Leary's honor.

- In April 1971, senior police officers from several major cities and urban counties, including New York, attended a CIA demonstration of an "explosive residue detection technique."

The memos and documents were released to the CIA as a result of a freedom-of-information request.